

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as indicated below, without prejudice:

Claims 1-51 (canceled)

52. (Original) A method for attaching a fence rail to a support structure, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) attaching a bracket to the support structure;
- (b) attaching a retention clip to the fence rail;
- (c) inserting said fence rail within said bracket;
- (d) engaging the retention clip with the bracket to attach the fence rail to the bracket; and
- (e) placing a cap on the bracket to cover the retention clip.

53. (Original) The method of claim 52, wherein step (a) comprises inserting at least one screw through said bracket into the support structure.

54. (Original) The method of claim 52, wherein step (b) comprises attaching said retention clip on an end of said fence rail.

55. (Original) The method of claim 52, wherein step (b) further comprises inserting a screw through said retention clip and said fence rail.

56. (Original) The method of claim 52, wherein step (c) comprises inserting said fence rail within an opening defined by a plurality of walls of said bracket.

57. (Original) The method of claim 52, wherein step (d) comprises engaging the retention clip with a catch disposed on said bracket.

58. (Original) The method of claim 57, wherein step (d) further comprises inserting said catch between resilient prongs of said retention member.

59. (Original) The method of claim 58, wherein step (d) further comprises engaging at least one tooth on said resilient prongs with a complementary tooth on said catch.

60. (Original) The method of claim 52, wherein step (e) comprises inserting at least one ridge formed on said cap within at least one groove formed on said bracket.

61. (Original) A method for attaching a fence rail to a support structure, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) forming a bracket having a back wall, said back wall having a front face and an opposing rear face, said back wall further comprising a rail support extending from said front face of said back wall for receiving said fence rail;

(b) attaching said bracket to said support structure such that said rear face faces said support structure;

(c) attaching a retention clip to the fence rail; and

(d) inserting said fence rail in said rail support such that said retention clip resides between said rear face and said support structure to attach said fence rail to said bracket.

62. (Original) The method of claim 61, wherein step (b) comprises inserting at least one fastener through said back wall.

63. (Original) The method of claim 61, wherein step (c) comprises inserting at least one fastener through said retention clip.

64. (Original) The method of claim 61, further comprising step (e) engaging at least one resilient prong disposed on said retention member with a catch disposed on said rear face of said back wall.

65. (Original) The method of claim 61, further comprising
(f) placing a cap on said bracket to cover said retention clip.

66. (Original) The method of claim 65, further comprising
inserting at least one ridge formed on said cap within at least
one groove formed on said bracket.

Claim 67 (canceled)

68. (New) The method of claim 64, further comprising
engaging at least one tooth on said at least one resilient prong
with a complementary tooth on said catch.

69. (New) The method of claim 64, further comprising
engaging two resilient prongs disposed on said retention member
with said catch.

70. (New) The method of claim 63, further comprising
recessing said fastener beneath a surface of said retention clip.

71. (New) The method of claim 61, wherein step (a) further
comprises forming said rail support of a plurality of walls.

72. (New) A method for attaching a fence rail to a support structure, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) attaching a bracket to the support structure, said bracket having a back wall, said back wall having a front face and an opposing rear face such that said rear face faces said support structure;

(b) attaching a retention clip to the fence rail;

(c) inserting said fence rail within said bracket;

(d) engaging the retention clip with the bracket to attach the fence rail to the bracket; and

(e) placing a cap on the bracket to cover the retention clip;

wherein step (a) comprises inserting at least one screw through said bracket into the support structure;

wherein step (b) comprises attaching said retention clip on an end of said fence rail;

wherein step (b) further comprises inserting a screw through said retention clip and said fence rail;

wherein step (c) comprises inserting said fence rail within an opening defined by a plurality of walls of said bracket;

wherein step (d) comprises engaging the retention clip with a catch disposed on said rear face of said bracket;

wherein step (d) further comprises inserting said catch between resilient prongs of said retention member;

wherein step (d) further comprises engaging at least one tooth on said resilient prongs with a complementary tooth on said catch; and

wherein step (e) comprises inserting at least one ridge formed on said cap within at least one groove formed on said bracket.